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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/051,728	01/15/2002	John J. Williams JR.	51462	8646
26327	7590	08/07/2006		EXAMINER
		THE LAW OFFICE OF KIRK D. WILLIAMS		MATTIS, JASON E
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			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2616	

DATE MAILED: 08/07/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/051,728	WILLIAMS ET AL.	
Examiner	Art Unit		
Jason E. Mattis	2616		

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 May 2006.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 12-13, 15-22, and 31-33 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 12-13, 15-22, and 31-33 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

1. This Office Action is in response to the amendment filed 5/20/06. Claims 1-11, 14, and 23-30 have been cancelled. New claims 31-33 have been added. Claims 12-13, 15-22, and 31-33 are currently pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 12-13, 15-22, and 31-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Giacopelli et al. (U.S. Pat. 4,893,304) in view of Dittia et al. (U.S. Pat. 6,826,186 B1).

With respect to claims 12, 19, and 33, Giacopelli et al. discloses a method and apparatus for mapping packets during a current forwarding cycle in a packet switching device (**See the abstract of Giacopelli et al. for reference to a packet switch performing a method to map packets during a switching cycle**). Giacopelli et al. also discloses for each particular packet of a plurality of packets stored in a recirculation buffer causing the particular packet to be sent over the current particular path in

response to determining that the particular packet can be sent over the current particular path based on a path occupancy of the current particular path (**See column 4 line 29 to column 5 line 54 and Figure 1 of Giacopelli et al. for reference to a group of packets being stored in recirculation loops 30, which together are a recirculation buffer, for reference to determining whether the packet can be sent over a current path to a destination port based on destination information in the packet and based on whether the path to the destination port is already assigned to another packet for the current packet switching cycle for, meaning the determining is based on path occupancy of the current path, and for reference to sending the packet over the path if the packet wins contention for the path).**)

Giacopelli et al. further discloses advancing a current particular path to a next path not already mapped for forwarding a packet during the current forwarding cycle (**See column 5 line 55 to column 6 line 24 to repeating the process of assigning packets to paths for each path, meaning after the first path is assigned a packet for the current packet switching cycle, a next path becomes a new current path**).

Giacopelli et al. also discloses after the operation of assigning each particular packet and while there is at least one path remaining not already mapped for forwarding a packet during the current forwarding cycle identifying a next packet of a group of input packets and causing the next input packet to be sent over the current particular path based on a path occupancy if the next input packet can be sent of the current particular path (**See column 4 line 29 to column 5 line 54 and Figure 1 of Giacopelli et al. for reference to a group of packets being stored in input controllers, for reference to**

identifying a packet from the input controllers and determining whether the input packet can be sent over a current path to a destination port based on destination information in the input packet and based on whether the path to the destination port is already assigned to another packet for the current packet switching cycle for, meaning the determining is based on path occupancy of the current path, and for reference to sending the packet over the path if the packet wins contention for the path). Giacopelli et al. further discloses advancing a current particular path to a next path not already mapped for forwarding a packet during the current forwarding cycle (**See column 5 line 55 to column 6 line 24 to repeating the process of assigning packets to paths for each path, meaning after a current path is assigned a packet for the current packet switching cycle, a next path becomes a new current path**). Giacopelli et al. also discloses that if the input packet cannot be sent of the current path, it is moved into the recirculation buffer (**See column 5 lines 31-54 and Figure 1 of Giacopelli et al. for reference to if all the current paths available to a destination for a packet have already been assigned to other packets, moving the packet that loses the contention for the paths into the recirculation loops**). Giacopelli et al. does not disclose one or more computer-readable media containing computer-executable instruction for performing the method. Giacopelli et al. also does not disclose generating a random index identifying a current particular path of a plurality of paths in the packet switching device.

With respect to claim 20, Giacopelli et al. discloses an apparatus for forwarding information over a plurality of paths (**See the abstract of Giacopelli et al. for**

reference to a packet switch forwarding packets over paths). Giacopelli et al. also discloses a recirculation buffer to store a first set of packets and an input to receive a second set of packets (**See column 4 lines 29-42 and Figure 1 of Giacopelli et al. for reference to storing a first set of packets in recirculation loops, which are a recirculation buffer, and for reference to inputs receiving a second set of packets through input port controllers**). Giacopelli et al. further discloses control logic configured to attempt to forward packets over the paths each packet time from the first and second sets of packets with preference given to packets in the first set and with the possible path being chosen based on the number of packets previously assigned to the paths during the current packet time wherein a packet remains or is added to the recirculation buffer if not sent over a possible path during a current packet time (**See column 4 line 29 to column 5 line 54 and Figure 1 of Giacopelli et al. for reference to using control logic to attempt to forward packets from both the recirculation loops and the inputs to possible paths with paths being chosen based on a number of packets previously assigned for the path in the current forwarding cycle wherein packets are added to the recirculation loops if it is not possible to send them over a path to the proper destination during the current forwarding cycle**). Giacopelli et al. does not disclose a random index generator to generate a random index. Giacopelli et al. also does not disclose that a possible particular path is determined based on the random index.

With respect to claims 12, 19-20, and 33, Dittia et al. discloses a packet switching method that is performed by a computer executing computer-executable

instructions on a computer-readable medium (**See column 9 lines 12-43 and Figure 1C of Dittia et al. for reference to a distributor, which is an apparatus mapping packets to paths for a particular forwarding cycle, operating by using a computer executing computer-executable instructions that are stored on a computer-readable medium**). Dittia et al. also discloses that a particular current path is chosen by generating a random index to choose a path to be the particular current path (**See column 11 lines 56-67 of Dittia et al. for reference to in one embodiment, choosing between multiple interconnection elements, or paths, using a random tiebreaking mechanism, meaning a random number is generated to randomly choose between multiple paths**). Choosing a particular current path by generating a random index has the advantage of allowing packets to be distributed more evenly across multiple paths to the same destination in a switching element.

It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, when presented with the work of Dittia et al., to combine choosing a particular current path by generating a random index, as suggested by Dittia et al., with the system and method of Giacopelli et al., with the motivation being to allow packets to be distributed more evenly across multiple paths to the same destination in a switching element.

With respect to claims 13 and 15, Giacopelli et al. discloses that the current forwarding cycle corresponds to a packet time corresponding to a round of sending one packet over each of the paths (**See column 9 line 66 to column 10 line 40 of Giacopelli et al. for reference to the packets being dynamically allocated in a**

forwarding cycle corresponding to a packet time slot, which is a round of sending packets over each path).

With respect to claim 16, Giacopelli et al. discloses that each of the paths correspond to a different physical plane of a packet switching system (**See Figures 1A-B of Giacopelli et al. for reference to each path being a different path, or plane, though a switch to a destination port**).

With respect to claims 17 and 18, Giacopelli et al. disclose that the plurality of path either include all the planes of the switching system or does not include all the plane of the switching system (**Giacopelli et al. inherently discloses that the plurality of paths assigned to transmit a data packet during a forwarding cycle would include all the planes of a switching system if a packet exists to be transmitted over each plane during the forwarding cycle and that the plurality of paths assigned to transmit a data packet during a forwarding cycle would not include all the planes of a switching system if a packet does not exist to be transmitted over each plane during the forwarding cycle**).

With respect to claims 21 and 22, Giacopelli et al. discloses that a packet is not sent during the current packet time if a destination of the packet is not reachable according to a data structure containing an indication of whether or not the destination is reachable (**See column 5 lines 31-54 and Figure 1 of Giacopelli et al. for reference to if all the current paths available to a destination for a packet have already been assigned to other packets, as determined based on a data structure storing an indication that the possible paths are already assigned, moving the packet that**

loses the contention for the paths into the recirculation loops, meaning the packet is not sent during the current packet time).

With respect to claims 31 and 32, Giacopelli et al. discloses that if a packet is not determined that it can not be sent over the current path it is moved to the end of the recirculation buffer (**See column 5 lines 31-54 and Figure 1 of Giacopelli et al. for reference to moving packets to the recirculation loops, which are shift registers, meaning they are moved to the end of the shift register, if the packet can not be sent over the current path).**

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 12-13, 15-22, and 31-33 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

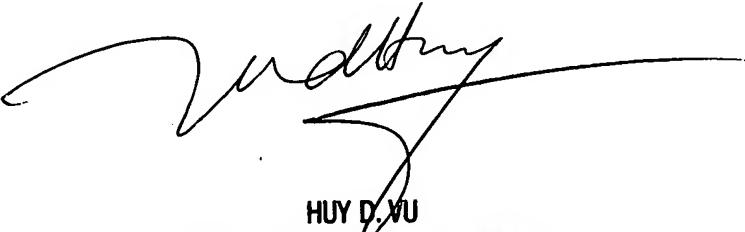
Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jason E. Mattis whose telephone number is (571) 272-3154. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8AM-5:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Huy Vu can be reached on (571) 272-3155. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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